



THE DERBY DISPATCH

Contacts: Darren Rogers (502) 636-4461 (o), (502) 345-1030 (m) or Darren.Rogers@KyDerby.com @DerbyMedia
Kevin Kerstein (502) 635-4712 (o), (610) 420-6971 (m) or Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com @HorseRacingKK

ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON HEATS UP SATURDAY WITH TRIPLE HEADER

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, April 4, 2019) – Three vital steppingstones to the \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) – the Wood Memorial (GII), Blue Grass (GII) and Santa Anita Derby (GI) – will be staged Saturday as 3-year-old Thoroughbreds continue their quest to accumulate sufficient points to start in the 145th running of America's greatest race on Saturday, May 4 at Churchill Downs.

Each race Saturday will award 100 points to the winner and 40 points to the runner-up, which is an almost-guaranteed spot in the starting gate for the Kentucky Derby. Additionally, the three 1 1/8-mile races will award 20 and 10 points, respectively, to the third and fourth-place finishers, which could be decisive to those competitors that have already garnered points in earlier races.

One word to describe this year's Road to the Kentucky Derby is competitive. Out of 40 different point races, there have been 37 different winners. At this point last year there were 32.

Compelling drama will be abundant as the prospects jostle for points with hope of landing within the Top 20 point leaders at the end of the Road to the Kentucky Derby (reminder: two invitational spots could be carved out for a horse on the European and Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby, respectively).

The Wood Memorial will go as Race 10 at Aqueduct with a post time of 6 p.m. (all times Eastern). The Blue Grass is Keeneland's Race 10 at 6:23 p.m. and the Santa Anita Derby is Race 9 at 7:18 p.m.

All three Road to the Kentucky Derby Championship Series races will be televised live on **NBCSN** beginning at 5:30 p.m. The races also will be broadcast on satellite radio's **Sirius 83** as part of **Horse Racing Radio Network's** coverage, which can also be heard online at www.horseracingradio.net.

GAME WINNER FACES FIVE IN SANTA ANITA DERBY – Champion juvenile **Game Winner** will seek to make amends for his first career defeat in a division of last month's Rebel (Grade II) when he heads a field of six in Saturday's \$1 million Santa Anita Derby (GI) over 1 1/8 miles.

The Road to the Kentucky Derby series prep will offer qualifying points of 100-40-20-10 to the top four finishers, though Game Winner himself is safely in with a current total of 45 accrued from earlier wins in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI) and American Pharoah (GI).

An intended starter in the San Felipe (GII) prior to its cancellation, Game Winner instead made his seasonal return in the split Rebel, where he just missed to **Omaha Beach** in a dramatic and thrilling photo finish.

Joining him in the Santa Anita Derby lineup is **Roadster**, who was beaten only two lengths by Game Winner in the Del Mar Futurity (GI) last September. In his only interim appearance, the son of Quality Road defeated **Nolo Contesto** by 2 1/2 lengths in a one-mile allowance on March 1.

One of the more precocious juveniles of last season, **Instagrand** makes his two-turn debut in the Santa Anita Derby. Winner of his first two starts by a combined margin of more than 20 lengths, including the Best Pal (GII), the **Jerry Hollendorfer** trainee was perhaps in need of a race when an even-money third in the March 9 Gotham (GIII) at Aqueduct following a seven-month absence.

More Ice and **Synthesis**, both of whom are stakes-placed, are a longshot duo that complete the compact field. – **Vance Hanson/Brisnet.com**

VEKOMA THE TOP DRAW AS 14 CHASE KENTUCKY DERBY POINTS IN BLUE GRASS – Kentucky Derby implications abound in Saturday's \$1 million Blue Grass (Grade II). A full field of 14 has been entered for the 1 1/8-mile test at Keeneland, one of seven major qualifiers in the Road to the Kentucky Derby series, and all need points to qualify for the first leg of the American Triple Crown. A total of 170 points is in the offering for the first four finishers (100-40-20-10 scale).

Vekoma has been installed as the 9-5 morning line favorite following a third in the Fountain of Youth (GII) at Gulfstream Park. Winner of the Nashua (GIII) at Aqueduct, the **George Weaver**-trained colt was beaten only 2 3/4 lengths while sustaining his first career setback last out. Vekoma gets a new rider in **Javier Castellano**.

Win Win Win, third as the favorite when making his first Kentucky Derby qualifying attempt in the March 9 Tampa Bay Derby (GII), comes next at 7-2 on the morning line. **Irad Ortiz Jr.** retains the mount for **Mike Trombetta**.

Signalman has shown an affinity for Churchill Downs, recording a fast-closing third in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI) and a victory in the Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) under the Twin Spires, and the **Kenny McPeck** pupil also finished second in the Breeders' Futurity (GI) at Keeneland last fall. But after opening 2019 with a seventh in the Fountain of Youth, Signalman currently sits only 23rd on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard with 18 points. Regular rider **Brian Hernandez Jr.** will be up.

Winner of the Jeff Ruby Steaks (GIII) on Turfway Park's Polytrack, **Somelikeitbrown** tops all Blue Grass entrants with 20 points (21st on the leaderboard). He'll try to gain ground in the standings while making his first dirt start for **Mike Maker** and **Tyler Gaffalione** has the assignment.

Todd Pletcher, a two-time Kentucky Derby-winning conditioner, has Sam F. Davis (GIII) third-placer **So Alive** in the mix. Churchill Downs-based trainers **Mark Casse** and **Dallas Stewart** both have a pair, with Casse sending out

Dream Maker and **Sir Winston** and **Stewart** represented by **Aquadini** and **Chess Chief**.

Rounding out the field are **Admire**, **Lucky Lee**, **Market King**, **Moonster** and **Parsimony**. — *James Scully/TwinSpires.com*

TACITUS LEADS COMPETATIVE RENEWAL OF THE WOOD MEMORIAL – Fifteen years after his sire **Tapit** won the race, **Tacitus** will attempt to keep Saturday's \$750,000 Wood Memorial (GII) somewhat of a family affair in the 1 1/8-mile Road to the Kentucky Derby series prep at Aqueduct.

A winner in two of three starts, including a maiden score at the Big A and a 1 1/4-length triumph over **Outshine** in last month's Tampa Bay Derby (GII), **Tacitus** will seek to become the second son of **Tapit** to win the Wood following **Frosted** in 2015.

Todd Pletcher will rely on **Outshine** and stakes-placed **Overdeliver** to win his sixth Wood Memorial since 2010. Compared to the more seasoned **Outshine**, **Overdeliver** has raced just twice, finishing a distant second last out in the \$75,000 Pasco at Tampa Bay Downs.

"We're excited about stretching him out to a mile and an eighth," said **Pletcher** of **Outshine**. "We've been pointing to the Wood since the Tampa Bay Derby and we're optimistic from what we're seeing."

"We didn't really have a firm plan (for **Overdeliver**) after the Pasco," **Pletcher** said. "It's really just been based on his last three works that he's trained exceptionally well that we decided to take a shot at the Wood. I think his last couple works he's shown some really strong gallop outs and indicates that he's capable of stretching out."

The competitive renewal also features **Tax**, a \$50,000 claim three starts back who improved to win the Feb. 2 Withers (GIII) by a head over **Not That Brady**.

"He's training tremendous; he looks good. We're just hoping we get a clean trip," trainer **Danny Gargan** said. "He's a nice horse and we're just hoping we can run top-three, so we can go to the (Kentucky) Derby (GI)."

Tax earned 10 Derby qualifying points winning the Withers, while points of 100-40-20-10 will be up for grabs for whomever finishes among the top four in the Wood.

Haikal faces no such pressure having earned 50 points in winning the one-mile Gotham (GIII) with a final-furlong blitz aided by a fast pace, but the son of **Daaher** has yet to race around two turns.

"The only question is the two turns, but we feel like it'll be no problem. Hopefully he won't be as far back as he was last time," trainer **Kiaran McLaughlin** said. "He could be in the middle of the pack or last, but he won't be 15 lengths off the pace like last time."

A wild card in the field is **Hoffa's Union**, who debuts for new connections after being privately acquired following a 15 1/2-length debut victory at Laurel in late February. Meanwhile, owners **Gary** and **Mary West** look to earn a third Kentucky Derby slot with two-time winner **Final Jeopardy**. The Wests currently have champion juvenile **Game Winner** and Florida Derby (GI) hero **Maximum Security** among their confirmed Derby hopefuls.

LOUISIANA DERBY WINNER BY MY STANDARDS BREEZES HALF-MILE IN :48.40 AT CHURCHILL DOWNS – *TwinSpires.com* Louisiana Derby (Grade II) winner **By My Standards**, currently the only Kentucky Derby contender based at Churchill Downs that is mathematically confirmed in the starting gate for the first Saturday in May, worked a half-mile in :48.40 Thursday morning at Churchill Downs with jockey **Gabriel Saez** in the irons.

"He's just a naturally talented colt," **Saez** said. "I just have to keep my fingers crossed for the next four weeks but I'm very confident he can take us there. He is just naturally gifted. In the work this morning he did everything so effortlessly – he's one of the smartest horses I've ever been on."

Owned by **Allied Racing's Chester Thomas**, a native of Madisonville, Ky., and trained by locally-based **Bret Calhoun**, **By My Standards** pulled off a 22-1 upset score in the Louisiana Derby under **Saez**. The colt entered the Louisiana Derby after breaking his maiden in mid-February.

"I think it was good to get this breeze in while things are still quiet back here," **Calhoun** said. "Four weeks to go. Let's get it done."

By My Standards is stabled on Barn 23 on the backstretch of Churchill Downs.

FUTURE WAGER

Betting in the last pool of the 2019 Kentucky Derby Future Wager pools is scheduled to open at noon (all times Eastern) Friday and will close on Sunday at 6 p.m. Wagering is available at www.twinspires.com or simulcast outlets throughout the country.

KDFW POOL 4 FIELD

#	Horse	Trainer	ML
1.	Anothertwistafate	Blaine Wright	30-1
2.	Bodexpress	Gustavo Delgado	20-1
3.	Bourbon War	Mark Hennig	15-1
4.	By My Standards	Bret Calhoun	12-1
5.	Code of Honor	Shug McGaughey III	12-1
6.	Cutting Humor	Todd Pletcher	15-1
7.	Galilean	Jerry Hollendorfer	30-1
8.	Game Winner	Bob Baffert	8-1
9.	Haikal	Kiaran McLaughlin	30-1
10.	Improbable	Bob Baffert	10-1
11.	Instagrand	Jerry Hollendorfer	15-1
12.	Long Range Toddy	Steve Asmussen	15-1
13.	Maximum Security	Jason Servis	8-1
14.	Omaha Beach	Richard Mandella	10-1
15.	Outshine	Todd Pletcher	15-1
16.	Plus Que Parfait	Brendan Walsh	30-1
17.	Roadster	Bob Baffert	15-1
18.	Signalman	Kenny McPeck	50-1
19.	Spinoff	Todd Pletcher	30-1
20.	Tacitus	Bill Mott	30-1
21.	Vekoma	George Weaver	20-1
22.	War of Will	Mark Casse	15-1
23.	Win Win Win	Mike Trombetta	50-1
24.	All Other 3-Year-Olds		15-1

NEXT WEEK'S ROAD TO THE DERBY RACES

Date	Race	Track	Top 4 Points
April 11	Cardinal Condition*	Chelmsford	30-12-6-3
April 13	Arkansas Derby	OP	100-40-20-10
April 13	Lexington	Kee	20-8-4-2

Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby

* European Road to the Kentucky Derby

PAST PERFORMANCES & HISTORY

Brinset.com Kentucky Derby Contenders Past Performances
<http://bit.ly/2UgHCrP>

Blue Grass Stakes History
<http://bit.ly/2VjiP2J>

Santa Anita Derby Stakes History
<http://bit.ly/2OK5PRc>

Wood Memorial Stakes History
<http://bit.ly/2HX5zOg>

Blue Grass Past Performances
<http://bit.ly/2IarWz2>

Santa Anita Derby Past Performances
<http://bit.ly/2Idtg4e>

Wood Memorial Past Performances
<http://bit.ly/2Idtg4e>

ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY TOP 25

#	Horse	Trainer	Points
1.	Plus Que Parfait	Brendan Walsh	104
2.	By My Standards	Bret Calhoun	100
3.	Maximum Security	Jason Servis	100
4.	Code of Honor	Shug McGaughey III	74
5.	War of Will	Mark Casse	60
6.	Long Range Toddy	Steve Asmussen	53.5
7.	Cutting Humor	Todd Pletcher	50
8.	Haikal	Kiaran McLaughlin	50
9.	Tacitus	Bill Mott	50
10.	Game Winner	Bob Baffert	45
11.	Gray Magician	Peter Miller	41
12.	Spinoff	Todd Pletcher	40
13.	Bodexpress	Gustavo Delgado	40
14.	Omaha Beach	Richard Mandella	37.5
15.	Bourbon War	Mark Hennig	31
16.	Another twistafate	Blaine Wright	30
17.	Country House	Bill Mott	30
18.	Sueno	Keith Desormeaux	28
19.	Improbable	Bob Baffert	25
20.	Mucho Gusto	Bob Baffert	24
21.	Somelikeithotbrown	Mike Maker	20
22.	Outshine	Todd Pletcher	20
23.	Signalman	Kenny McPeck	18
24.	Tax	Danny Gargan	12
25.	Derma Louvre (JPN)	Hirofumi Toda	10

DERBY DETAIL

MAIDENS IN THE DERBY – Florida Derby (Grade I) runner-up **Bodexpress** will attempt to become only the fourth horse in Kentucky Derby history to win the race as a maiden.

Buchanan (1884), **Sir Barton** (1919) and **Brokers Tip** (1933) are the only maidens to win the Kentucky Derby. Sir Barton would go on to become racing's first Triple Crown winner.

Eleven maidens have run in the Kentucky Derby since 1937: **Sonneteer** (2017, 16th); **Trojan Nation** (2016, 16th); **Nationalore** (1998, 9th); **Pendleton Ridge** (1990, 13th); **Great Redeemer** (1979, 10th); **Fourulla** (1971, 19th); **The Chosen One** (1959, 14th); **Flamingo** (1958, 13th); **On the Mark** (1950, 8th); **Senecas Coin** (1949, 14th); **Bert G.** (1945, 14th).

TRIPLE CROWN NEWS AND NOTES – Trainer **Richard Mandella** confirmed Rebel Stakes fourth-place finisher **Extra Hope** did not enter Saturday's Santa Anita Derby (GI) and underwent a precautionary physical exam. Owner **Samantha Siegel** said on Twitter, "We're taking our time (with Extra Hope)." ... Four-time Kentucky Derby-winning trainer **D. Wayne Lukas** arrived back to Churchill Downs on Wednesday morning and was one of the first on the track at 6 a.m. with pony **Starbuck**. "It's the greatest time of the year," said Lukas, who will attempt to qualify **Market King** to the Derby in Saturday's Blue Grass.

THE RUNDOWN

WOOD MEMORIAL (GII)

Saturday, April 6, \$750,000, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Aqueduct (R10), Post time: 6 p.m. EDT. Queens, N.Y., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10. TV: NBCSN, TVG.

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	Tax (12)	Junior Alvarado	Danny Gargan	9-2
2.	Tacitus (50)	Jose Ortiz	Bill Mott	5-2
3.	\$-Hoffa's Union (0)	Dylan Davis	Mark Casse	6-1
4.	Haikal (50)	Rajiv Maragh	Kiaran McLaughlin	7-2
5.	Final Jeopardy (0)	Manny Franco	Jason Servis	8-1
6.	Overdeliver (0)	Kendrick Caramouche	Todd Pletcher	20-1
7.	Not That Brady (4)	Reylu Gutierrez	Rudy Rodriguez	20-1
8.	\$-Grumps Little Tots (0)	Jose Lezcano	Jason Servis	30-1
9.	+Math Wizard (0)	Eric Cancel	Saffie Joseph Jr.	30-1
10.	Outshine (20)	John Velazquez	Todd Pletcher	6-1
11.	\$-Joevia (0)	Nik Juarez	Gregg Sacco	30-1

BLUE GRASS (GII)

Saturday, April 6, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Keeneland (R10), Post time: 6:23 p.m. EDT, Lexington, Ky, Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10. TV: NBCSN, TVG

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer	ODDS
1.	Somelikeithotbrown (20)	Tyler Gaffalione	Mike Maker	10-1
2.	Vekoma (10)	Javier Castellano	George Weaver	9-5
3.	Signalman (18)	Brian Hernandez Jr.	Kenny McPeck	8-1
4.	Market King (7.5)	Jon Court	D. Wayne Lukas	20-1
5.	Chess Chief (0)	Paco Lopez	Dallas Stewart	30-1
6.	Dream Maker (0)	Florent Geroux	Mark Casse	10-1
7.	Admire (0)	Robby Albarado	Dale Romans	15-1
8.	Win Win Win (10)	Irad Ortiz Jr.	Mike Trombetta	7-2
9.	Sir Winston (1)	Julien Leparoux	Mark Casse	15-1
10.	Lucky Lee (0)	Chris Landeros	John Servis	20-1
11.	So Alive (2)	Luis Saez	Todd Pletcher	15-1
12.	+Parsimony (0)	Mario Gutierrez	Doug O'Neill	20-1
13.	Moonster (4)	John McKee	Dale Romans	30-1
14.	Aquadini (0)	Corey Lanerie	Dallas Stewart	30-1

SANTA ANITA DERBY (GI)

Saturday, April 6, \$1 million 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Santa Anita (R8), Post time: 7:18 p.m. EDT. Arcadia, Calif., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10. TV: NBCSN, TVG.

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	Roadster (0)	Mike Smith	Bob Baffert	5-2
2.	More Ice (0)	Geovanni Franco	Jerry Hollendorfer	30-1
3.	Nolo Contesto (0)	Joe Talamo	John Sadler	6-1
4.	Synthesis (0)	Rafael Bejarano	George Papaprodromou	30-1
5.	Instagrando (10)	Flavien Prat	Jerry Hollendorfer	3-1
6.	Game Winner (45)	Joel Rosario	Bob Baffert	4-5

+Not Triple Crown Nominated

\$-Late Nomination to Triple Crown

SANTA ANITA OAKS (GI)

Saturday, April 6, \$400,000, 3yo fillies, 1 1/16 M, Santa Anita (R3), Post time: 4 p.m. EDT. Arcadia, Calif., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10. TV: TVG

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	Flor de La Mar (0)	Joel Rosario	Bob Baffert	5-1
2.	Chasing Yesterday (60)	Mike Smith	Bob Baffert	3-1
3.	++Stirred (0)	Drayden Van Dyke	Michael McCarthy	15-1
4.	Slewgoodtobetrue (0)	Geovanni Franco	Peter Eurton	12-1
5.	Bellafina (32)	Flavien Prat	Simon Callaghan	2-5

GAZELLE (GII)

Saturday, April 6, \$300,000, 3yo fillies, 1 1/8 M, Aqueduct (R8), Post time: 4:47 p.m. EDT. Queens, N.Y., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10. TV: TVG

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	Aflect Destiny (6)	Anthony Salgado	Uriah St. Lewis	15-1
2.	Espresso Shot (50)	Eric Cancel	Jorge Abreu	9-5
3.	Off Topic (0)	John Velazquez	Todd Pletcher	5-1
4.	Positive Spirit (10)	Jose Ortiz	Rodolphe Brisset	5-2
5.	Always Shopping (10)	Manny Franco	Todd Pletcher	3-1
6.	++Proud Emma (0)	Junior Alvarado	Peter Miller	6-1

ASHLAND (GI)

Saturday, April 6, \$500,000, 3yo fillies, 1 1/16 M, Keeneland (R9), Post time: 5:45 p.m. EDT. Lexington, Ky., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10. TV: TVG

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	Bizwhacks (10)	Mario Gutierrez	Doug O'Neill	15-1
2.	Chocolate Kisses (51)	Tyler Gaffalione	Mark Casse	5-1
3.	Lady Kate (4)	Corey Lanerie	Eddie Kenneally	15-1
4.	Jaywalk (35)	Javier Castellano	John Servis	8-5
5.	Feedback (10)	Irad Ortiz Jr.	Chad Brown	3-1
6.	Restless Rider (22)	Brian Hernandez Jr.	Kenny McPeck	5-2
7.	Bell's the One (0)	Florent Geroux	Neil Pessin	15-1
8.	Out for a Spin (0)	Paco Lopez	Dallas Stewart	20-1

BEAUMONT (GIII)

Sunday, April 7, \$150,000, 3yo fillies, 7 F, Keeneland (R7), Post time: 4:24 p.m. EDT. Lexington, Ky., Top 4 Points: 10-4-2-1. TV: TVG

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer
1.	++Shanghai Rain (0)	Gabriel Saez	Bret Calhoun
2.	Mother Mother (7)	Florent Geroux	Bob Baffert
3.	Queens of Beas (0)	Jose Ortiz	Jorge Abreu
4.	Another Time (0)	Paco Lopez	Barbara Minshall
5.	Fancy Dress Party (0)	Luis Saez	Ben Colebrook
6.	Power Gal (Jpn) (10)	Tyler Gaffalione	Mark Casse
7.	++Iva (0)	John Velazquez	Wesley Ward
8.	Feedback (10)	Irad Ortiz Jr.	Chad Brown

++Not Kentucky Oaks Nominated

ROAD TO DERBY VIDEO SERIES

- Episode 7: A Big Race for an Intimate Track
<http://bit.ly/RTKDEP7>
- Episode 6: A Potential Super Star
<https://bit.ly/2SUIYYC>
- Episode 5: Follow Trainer Kelly Breen as he Trains Son of Orb
<https://bit.ly/2SwgeF3>
- Episode 4 :Kenny McPeck – The Underdog Trainer
<https://bit.ly/2td1fyM>
- Episode 3: Breeders' Cup Battle Produces Early Derby Favorite
<https://bit.ly/2UZkWrY> R
- Episode 2: A Twist in the Road at Keeneland
<https://bit.ly/2DBL05h>
- Episode 1: Neuroscience to the Iroquois Stakes
<https://bit.ly/2SR398P>

SPOTLIGHT HORSE: MAXIMUM SECURITY

- Florida Derby (GI) winner **Maximum Security** could have been purchased just a few months ago for \$16,000. Now, the **Jason Servis**-trained colt is Kentucky Derby bound for longtime owners **Gary and Mary West**.
- **Owner information:** Gary and Mary West are one of the most iconic couples in horse racing. The Wests have been married for 50 years and live in San Diego, Calif. The couple started the telecommunications company **West Corp.** in 1986. The company, which was founded in Omaha, Neb., eventually became public in 2013 and had a valuation of \$5.2 billion. The Wests began their involvement in horse racing in 1980 with trainer **Ben Glass**. The Wests' stable began to expand in the early 1990s and they had their first Kentucky Derby starter, **Rockamundo**, in 1993. The Wests have campaigned multiple Grade I winners including **Book Review**, **New Year's Day**, **Power Broker** and **West Coast**.
- **Trainer information:** Servis originally worked as an exercise rider and jockey's valet prior to becoming a trainer in 2001. Servis is no stranger to hard-knocking claiming horses. While Maximum Security debuted for a \$16,000 claiming tag, a former \$16,000 claimer, **My Every Wish**, helped vault Servis into the 2018 Kentucky Derby with **Firenze Fire**. After claiming My Every Wish in 2012, Servis and partner **Ron Lombardi** bred the mare to **Poseidon's Warrior** and produced Firenze Fire. Servis' brother, **John**, is a fellow trainer based on the east coast, and he won the Kentucky Derby in 2004 with **Smarty Jones**. – **Kevin Kerstein**

SCULLY'S KENTUCKY DERBY REPORT

WIDE OPEN WITH FOUR PREPS REMAINING

Favorites aren't winning Kentucky Derby prep races and a former \$16,000 claimer, **Maximum Security**, continued to muddle the picture with a convincing wire-to-wire win in the \$1 million Florida Derby (Grade I) at Gulfstream Park.

Maximum Security brought solid BRIS Speed ratings into his stakes debut and the unbeaten colt wasn't a big surprise as the 9-2 fourth choice in the wagering. But the same can't be said for **Bodexpress**, who finished a clear second at 71-1 odds despite being winless from four previous outings.

Plus Que Parfait, a well-beaten 13th in the Feb. 16 Risen Star (GII) at Fair Grounds, added to the mayhem when rebounding in Saturday's \$2.5 million UAE Derby (GII) at Meydan. U.S. shippers had been 0-for-17 in the major qualifier (points on a 100-40-20-10 scale) and Plus Que Parfait outfinished **Gray Magician**, who was unplaced in a Santa Anita Park allowance two starts back. The top two shipped overseas to gain Kentucky Derby berths.

Up-and-coming types have thrived in the build-up to the 2019 Kentucky Derby. Horses with back class can't be dismissed, with juvenile Grade I winners **Game Winner** and **Improbable** remaining prominent, but the first three major qualifiers (Louisiana Derby, Florida Derby and UAE Derby), and 10 of the last 16 races in the Road to the Kentucky Derby series, have been captured by first-time stakes victors. Four of

the last eight winners were making their initial stakes appearance. Favorites have dropped 10 straight, with **War of Will** being the last short-priced winner in mid-February, and it's shaping up to be an extremely competitive Run for the Roses on May 4.

The final four major qualifiers will be offered over the two weekends and Game Winner can make a case for Kentucky Derby favoritism by winning the Santa Anita Derby (GI), one of three Saturday along with the Blue Grass (GII) at Keeneland and Wood Memorial (GII) at Aqueduct.

The fourth and final Kentucky Derby Future Wager (KDFW) begins this Friday at noon (EDT) and concludes Sunday at 6 p.m. Bettors will take the results of Blue Grass, Santa Anita Derby and Wood Memorial into account but if you fancy a horse in the April 13 Arkansas Derby (GI), the potential exists for a decent price in the KDFW. Improbable is among those scheduled to compete at Oaklawn Park and I will give serious consideration to Rebel (GII) division winners **Long Range Toddy** and **Omaha Beach** in pool 4.

Florida Derby

Three of the last six Kentucky Derby winners captured the Florida Derby and Maximum Security will bring commendable BRIS Speed ratings to Churchill Downs, netting a 102 for a facile 3 1/2-length decision last Saturday. That's tied for the highest number in this year's qualifiers. The **Gary and Mary West** homebred has proven tractable for trainer **Jason Servis**, rating kindly in a previous start before romping by 6 1/2 lengths, and his other three wins came wire to wire.

Luis Saez hustled his mount from post No. 7 and Maximum Security easily made a short lead, dictating a slow fractions in :24.42, :48.98 and 1:12.90 while unopposed. He drew off sharply into the stretch and finished fast to complete 1 1/8 miles in 1:48.86, generating an enormous 123 BRIS Late Pace rating after recording the final three-eighths of a mile in 35:96 seconds.

From the second crop of New Year's Day, who is by Street Cry and never raced again after winning the 2013 Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI), Maximum Security made his first appearance in a \$16,000 maiden claimer at Gulfstream on Dec. 20 and connections were fortunate not to lose the 9 3/4-length debut winner. He captured his next two starts over starter claiming foes by a combined 24 3/4 lengths and brought the top last-out BRIS Speed rating (100) into the Florida Derby, which represented not only a gigantic class test but the first two-turn attempt for the bay colt.

Maximum Security dismissed any class concerns but the manner of victory does give pause because he's unlikely to have everything his own way on slow fractions in the Kentucky Derby. I'm less concerned when a front-runner controls a slow pace and finishes fast, with **Always Dreaming** being a prime example. The 2017 Kentucky Derby winner could have run quicker early when posting a five-length score in his penultimate prep but took advantage of fortuitous circumstances, registering 58 E1 and 54 E2 Pace ratings as he crawled through the opening stages. His 112 Late Pace rating that afternoon came as no surprise.

Horses with an off-the-pace run style are at the mercy of front-runners, making huge Late Pace numbers much more dubious if the tempo is on the slow side. The 129 and 110 Late Pace ratings garnered by **Pyro** for wins in the 2008 Risen Star

and Louisiana Derby behind slow paces didn't hold up weeks later.

Maximum Security's pedigree appears well-suited to the 1 1/4-mile trip, with his dam being a half-sister to two-time Jockey Club Gold Cup (GI) winner **Flat Out**, but the 3-year-old was born on May 14, 2016. A late foaling date has not proven advantageous, with upset winners **Mine That Bird** (50-1) and **Thunder Gulch** (24-1) being the only May foals to win the Kentucky Derby in the last 30+ years. **Exterminator**, who was born on May 30, 1915, is the latest known foal to win the Kentucky Derby.

Bodexpress did have the second-best last-out Speed rating entering the Florida Derby, earning a 97 for a neck second in a Feb. 16 maiden special weight at seven furlongs, but had never been two turns and acted terribly in the post parade, dumping jockey **Nik Juarez** as he became agitated by the crowd noise. The **Gustavo Delgado**-trained colt tracked in second from the start and came under a heavy ride while losing ground on the far turn, but Bodexpress was always safe in second and finished 3 1/4 lengths clear of third on the wire.

He'll need to be better composed to handle the walk-over, paddock scene and post parade on Kentucky Derby Day and Bodexpress' female line isn't encouraging for 1 1/4 miles, with his first dam being by City Zip and the second by Meadowlake.

Fountain of Youth (GII) upsetter **Code of Honor** wound up a non-threatening third after weaving in and out through the stretch and his BRIS Speed ratings this year (95-95-91) are on the low side. **Bourbon War** disappointed mightily as the 5-2 second choice, finishing about another length back in fourth. From three starts this year, the Fountain of Youth runner-up has failed to improve upon the 96 BRIS Speed rating registered in his juvenile finale last December.

The bubble burst for **Hidden Scroll**, who dropped from Kentucky Derby consideration after weakening to sixth as the 9-5 favorite. After recording a spectacular 14-length debut win in late January, the late-starting colt took a step back in a pair of qualifiers.

UAE Derby

Plus Que Parfait was based at Churchill Downs last year and his best showing prior to the UAE Derby came in the Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) under the Twin Spires, a neck second to **Signalman** in late November. He opened his sophomore season as the second betting choice in the Jan. 19 Lecomte (GIII) at Fair Grounds and rallied for fifth after a disastrous start, but regressed when beating only one rival without incidence in the aforementioned Risen Star.

Adding blinkers for the about 1 3/16-mile UAE Derby, Plus Que Parfait saved ground until the stretch and rallied late up the inside to deny Gray Magician by three-quarters of a length.

He didn't appear to beat much but Plus Que Parfait's improving form and affinity for Churchill offers some appeal. **Imperial Racing** campaigns the Point of Entry colt and **Brendan Walsh** trains.

It was a tough beat for supporters of Gray Magician, who appeared to launching a winning move when charging to the fore in the stretch. The son of Greydar recorded his second consecutive runner-up finish for **Peter Miller** and Gray Magician flattered Preakness-bound **Alwaysmining**, who defeated him by 4 1/4 lengths in the Feb. 16 Miracle Wood at Laurel Park.

Scully's Kentucky Derby Top 10

- 1 OMAHA BEACH: Arkansas Derby next for winner of Rebel 2nd division
- 2 GAME WINNER: Santa Anita Derby favorite exits nose second to Omaha Beach
- 3 LONG RANGE TODDY: Arkansas Derby next for winner of Rebel 1st division
- 4 MAXIMUM SECURITY: Had everything his own way but still impressed in Florida Derby
- 5 IMPROBABLE: Seeks to rebound from first loss in Arkansas Derby
- 6 TACITUS: Will try to back up Tampa Bay Derby upset in Wood Memorial
- 7 BY MY STANDARDS: Late-developing colt sprung Louisiana Derby upset
- 8 ANOTHER TWISTAFATE: May need points after just missing in Sunland Derby
- 9 SPINOFF: Louisiana Derby runner-up could be Pletcher's best hope
- 10 CODE OF HONOR: Fountain of Youth winner came up short in Florida Derby

LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS UPDATE

Bellafina, widely considered the current favorite for the Kentucky Oaks (GI), will have her final tune-up for that May 3 event on Saturday in the \$400,000 Santa Anita Oaks (GI).

The 1 1/16-mile event is one of three Road to the Kentucky Oaks series preps that will take place on Saturday across the country, the others being the \$500,000 Ashland (GI) at Keeneland over 1 1/16 miles and the \$300,000 Gazelle (GII) at Aqueduct over 1 1/8 miles. Oaks qualifying points of 100-40-20-10 will be distributed to the top four finishers in each race.

A multiple Grade I winner last year before a surprising but excusable fourth in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies (GI) when she was determined to be in season, Bellafina was a facile winner of the seven-furlong Santa Ynez (GII) in early January, but a much narrower scorer of the one-mile Las Virgenes (GII) two months ago when setting a pressured pace.

Trainer **Bob Baffert** will provide the chief opposition. Starlet (GI) winner **Chasing Yesterday**, a half-sister to Triple Crown winner **American Pharoah**, enters off a popular win in the \$200,000 Sunland Park Oaks in which she started as the 1-20 favorite. Baffert also saddles **Flor de La Mar**, a daughter of Tiznow who won on debut in January before disappointing in an allowance as an odds-on choice.

The Ashland features a rematch of the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies one-two **Jaywalk** and **Restless Rider**. Voted champion of the division after the Breeders' Cup score, Jaywalk was a stunning disappointment in last month's Davona Dale (GII) at Gulfstream when she weakened to fourth as the 1-5 favorite.

Restless Rider, who won the Alcibiades (GI) over the Ashland track and trip in October, was also upset at odds-on when last seen in the Golden Rod (GII) at Churchill on Thanksgiving weekend. The gray by Distorted Humor has been in steady training for **Kenny McPeck** all winter at Gulfstream.

Feedback stretches out beyond seven furlongs for the first time after winning the Forward Gal (GIII) in early February

for **Chad Brown**. She also won her debut at Saratoga last August.

Chocolate Kisses stands to benefit if the pace is fast, as was the case in last month's Honeybee (GIII) at Oaklawn when she made up a 12-length deficit to win by one length.

The Gazelle has a similarly short field of six. **Positive Spirit**, who dominated the track-and-distance Demoiselle (GII) in November, looks to rebound from a poor showing in the Feb. 16 Rachel Alexandra (GII) at Fair Grounds.

Also in the lineup are **Espresso Shot**, winner of the \$250,000 Busher; **Always Shopping**, who landed the \$100,000 Busanda in early February; and California-based allowance winner **Proud Emma**. — **Vance Hanson/Brisnet.com**

ROAD TO THE LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS TOP 20

#	Horse	Trainer	Points
1.	Champagne Anyone	Ian Wilkes	113
2.	Street Band	Larry Jones	105
3.	Liora	Wayne Catalano	71
4.	Chasing Yesterday	Bob Baffert	60
5.	Serengeti Empress	Tom Amoss	60
6.	Chocolate Kisses	Mark Casse	51
7.	Jeltrin	Alexis Delgado	51
8.	Espresso Shot	Jorge Abreu	50
9.	\$-Cookie Dough	Stan Gold	40
10.	\$-Dunbar Road	Chad Brown	40
11.	Jaywalk	John Servis	35
12.	Bellafina	Simon Callaghan	32
13.	Eres Tu	Steve Asmussen	24
14.	Restless Rider	Kenny McPeck	22
15.	Sweet Diane	Mike Stidham	22
16.	Oxy Lady	Jack Siston	21
17.	Point of Honor	George Weaver	20
18.	Naughty Joker	Wesley Ward	20
19.	Motion Emotion	Tom Van Berg	20
20.	Positive Spirit	Rodolphe Brissett	20

\$ Notified Churchill Downs officials that they will late nominate to the Kentucky Oaks

TAKING SHAPE

The possible fields for Kentucky Derby Championship Series races are fluid as horsemen vie for points on the "Road to the Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve." Below are known horses mentioned to be under consideration for each race based on published news reports and other sources:

ARKANSAS DERBY (GI)

Saturday, April 13, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Oaklawn Park, Hot Springs, Ark., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
Known Likely Starters:			
Improbable (25)	Bob Baffert	146.3	E/P 6
Galilean (7.5)	Jerry Hollendorfer	141.1	E 8
Omaha Beach (37.5)	Richard Mandella	139.4	E/P 8
Long Range Toddy (57.5)	Steve Asmussen	137.8	E/P 6
Gray Attempt (10)	Jinks Fires	132.9	E 8
Known Possible Starters:			
Country House (30)	Bill Mott	139.2	S 0
Last Judgment (0)	Todd Pletcher	132.1	E/P 6

LEXINGTON (GIII)

Saturday, April 13, \$200,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Keeneland, Lexington, Ky., Top 4 Points: 20-8-4-2.

Horse (Points)	Trainer	Brisnet.com Prime Power	Run Style
Known Possible Starters:			
Sueno (28)	Keith Desormeaux	139.8	E/P 6

-END-